

2018-2019 Advocacy Committee Report to the Champlain Region Family Council Network 2019 AGM

The Advocacy Committee continues to advocate on long-standing issues which affect the care and safety of our family members and friends living in long-term care homes. Committee members include: Rosemary Cavan, Janet Luloff, Mary Frances Taylor, Grace Welch (Chair) and Doreen Rocque (ex-officio).

Our key priorities for action remain the same as in previous years: improving care by mandating a minimum care standard (minimum four hours of direct care per resident per day); ending violence in long-term care by expanding the Behavioural Supports Ontario (BSO) program; and, lastly, achieving better capacity planning to reduce wait lists, and ensure that there are adequate beds for an aging population.

Provincial Election:

Much of our activity last year focused on the provincial election. Prior to the election, the committee wrote to all the candidates from the Progressive Conservative, NDP and Green Parties asking how they would improve long-term care in Ontario. Mary Frances drafted questions for family members to take up with candidates when they came to the door or participated in all candidate meetings. After the election, letters and emails were sent to all the newly elected MPPs to congratulate them and inform them of the urgent need for more and better long-term care. We also sent a letter to Christine Elliott congratulating her on her appointment as Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and reminding her of the long-standing issues in LTC.

Petition:

The Time to Care Act was re-introduced in the Legislature in July 2018 as Bill 13 by NDP MPP Theresa Armstrong. It was going to be brought forward for second reading on August 9, but the group representing PSWs asked that it be delayed to allow for additional lobbying and education of the newly elected MPPs. Our colleagues on the Region 4 (Hamilton-Niagara-Haldimand-Brant) Advocacy Committee have re-activated the petition in support of the Bill and has been collecting signatures. We are reviewing our plans regarding the petition.

Meetings with MPPs:

Although we reached out to all the new PC MPPs after the election, we have had limited response to our concerns or requests for meetings. We have met with Conservative MPPs Jeremy Roberts (Ottawa West-Nepean), Lisa MacLeod (Nepean), Jim McDonnell (Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry), NDP MPP Joel Harden (Ottawa Centre) and Liberal MPP and Interim Leader of the Liberal Party, John Fraser (Ottawa South). We are seeking meetings with John Yakabuski, Merilee Fullerton and Goldi Gharmari.

Presentations:

For the first year since 2015, we did not secure a speaking spot before the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs as part of their 2019 pre-budget consultations. We did, however, send a submission to the committee; it is available on the Network's website.

Letters Sent:

- In April 2018, a letter to all Liberal MPPs in the region to thank them for the budget announcements related to long term care and to again urge that the four (4) hours of direct care be made a priority.
- Pre- and post-election letters to sensitize candidates and elected officials to LTC issues, as noted above.
- To the newly appointed Federal Seniors minister in July to ask that a national seniors' strategy be developed and that the strategy recognize that long-term care is an integral part of the life-long continuum of health care
- To the Mayor of the City of Ottawa and to all councillors in January to support the city homes and the actions they had taken to address violence against residents. We want to ensure that the city will continue or even increase its support for the four homes in the 2019 budget so that these residences can continue to enhance the delivery of care and resident quality of life. We also noted the importance of transformational change such as that offered by the Butterfly, Eden and Green House models.

- To Christine Elliott on July 16, 2018 to congratulate her on her appointment and again on March 15, 2019 to ask specific questions as to how the government will address systemic problems in the LTC sector. We are concerned that LTC will be diminished under the new super-health agency created by Bill 74.

Liaison/Outreach:

The Advocacy Committee regularly liaises with AdvantAge Ontario (formerly the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes & Services for Seniors).

Our membership on the Champlain LHIN's LTC Liaison Committee has been formalized in their terms of reference. That Committee, comprised of representatives from non-profit and for-profit homes and the LHIN, meets four to five times per year to discuss issues of common concern; Grace continues to represent the Network on the committee. Grace also sits on an ad-hoc committee of the Council on Aging that is looking at long-term care in the area.

Grace and Doreen were invited to attend the National Seniors Day Reception at the House of Commons sponsored by the Honourable Geoff Regan, Speaker of Commons. It was an opportunity to meet others who are interested in advocacy issues related to seniors.

In June, several members of the Advocacy Committee and the Executive met with Mary Boutette, COO of the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre to learn more about LTC funding, especially the impact of CMI indexing on a home's nursing budget. Several members of the Committee also met with Dean Lett, Director of the four municipal homes in July to discuss the recommendations of the Fougere Report.

Mary Frances and Grace attended the Ontario Health Coalition-sponsored panel on LTC issues held on September 17. Doreen was one of the panel members representing the point of view of families and family councils. Grace and Doreen participated in the press release of the Ontario Health Coalition's report entitled: Situation Critical. Afterwards, Grace and the OHC representative Al Dupuis, were interviewed by the CBC; excerpts were aired on CBC radio and television evening news and published on the CBC website.

The CRFCN was invited to join the Champlain Dementia Network's (CDN) newly formed Supporting Transformations in LTC Working Group. The purpose of the working group is to support Champlain region long term care homes in adopting transformational approaches to resident care, building on the CDN's growing relationship with the region's Advantage Committee (municipal and non-profit long-term care homes). The CRFCN will be represented by Grace and Janet on this working group..

The Committee also regularly liaises with the Chair of the Region 4 Advocacy Committee on issues of common concern such as the Time to Care Petition and MPP education, and with the newly created network in the Kingston area.

Future:

We will be closely monitoring the impact of Bill 74, the new health care act, on LTC homes as well as other key initiatives that are of importance to families and friends in the Champlain LHIN. We will continue to seek out new partnerships and consider new methods and avenues of advocating for quality care in LTC. Feedback from Family and Friends Councils in the region is important for prioritizing our efforts.

Lastly, I would like to thank the members of the Committee for all their hard work and support during the past year.

Respectfully submitted by:
Grace Welch
Chair, Advocacy Committee
April 13, 2019